

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 12132 182227Z

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ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: LIBERAL PARTY MANIFESTO

REF: LONDON 12049

SUMMARY. HARD ON THE HEELS OF ITS ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, THE
LIBERALS BECAME THE THIRD MAJOR PARTY TO ISSUE A MANIFESTO
FOR THE ELECTION ANNOUNCED TODAY FOR OCTOBER 10. JEREMY THORPE
PRODUCED THE ELECTION DOCUMENT SEPTEMBER 17 AT A CONFERENCE
WHICH RECEIVED NATION-WIDE TELEVISION COVERAGE.

THE MANIFESTO APPEALS TO NON-LIBERAL VOTERS TO
SUPPORT THE PARTY AS BRITAIN'S ONLY HOPE IN VIEW OF THE
SERIOUS, EVEN CRITICAL ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL

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PAGE 02 LONDON 12132 182227Z

ISSUES; THORPE PLAYED DOWN THE ISSUE OF A POSSIBLE COALITION

IN WHICH THE LIBERALS MIGHT PLAY A SIGNIFICANT PART AND CALLED FOR VOTERS TO GIVE THE NATION A LIBERAL MAJORITY. HE SAID THE LIBERALS WERE OUT TO DESTROY THE ELABORATE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM WHICH HAD BROUGHT THE NATION TO THE BRINK OF DISASTER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE LIBERAL PARTY ISSUED ITS MANIFESTO SEPTEMBER 17, ONLY A FEW DAYS AFTER ITS ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, AND, WHILE NEWSPAPER READERS WERE STILL TRYING TO OBSORB IT, THE PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCED DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT SEPT 20, ELECTIONS OCTOBER 10, AND SEATING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT OCTOBER 22. THE MANIFESTO WAS PRODUCED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH RECEIVED NATION-WIDE TELEVISION COVERAGE AND WHICH GAVE JEREMY THORPE EVEN MORE EXPOSURE TO THE VOTERS THROUGH INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONS.

2. THE MANIFESTO EMPHASIZED THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY IS ASKING THE ELECTORATE FOR SUPPORT IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE TWO-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM WHICH HAS BROUGHT BRITAIN TO THE BRINK OF CRISIS -- ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL. INFLATION IS THE PRIMARY EVIL AND ONLY THE LIBERALS CAN SOLVE THE NATION'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE TWO OTHER PARTIES ARE BASED ON CLASS DIFFERENCES, AND DIVISION, WHILE THE NATION NEEDS UNITY AND COMMONNESS OF PURPOSE. TO SOLVE THE INFLATION PROBLEM, THE LIBERALS PROPOSE A COMBINATION OF INDUSTRIAL RECONSTRUCTION AND A PRICES AND INCOMES POLICY BACKED UP WITH STATUTORY PROVISIONS, PRIMARILY PENALTY TAXATION.

3. ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS, THE LIBERALS ATTACKED LABOUR AND THE TORIES FOR REPRESENTING SPECIAL INTERESTS (TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPECTIVELY) AND NOT THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION AS A WHOLE.

4. REFERRING TO DEVOLUTION, THE MANIFESTO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE KILBRANDON COMMISSION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PARLIAMENTS IN SCOTLAND AND WALES WITH SUBSTANTIAL LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGETARY POWERS. FURTHER, FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE PRESENT "ANTIQUATED" ELECTORAL SYSTEM BY THE SINGLE TRANSFERRABLE VOTE (PROPOTIONAL REPRESENTATION). LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LONDON 12132 182227Z

5. THE MANIFESTO CALLS FOR REFORMS IN HOUSING, SOCIAL SERVICES, ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO ONE-PARENT FAMILIES, EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN, EXPANSION IN AGRICULTURE, AND CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR BRITISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMON MARKET.

6. COMMENT: THE MANIFESTO IS FILLED WITH THE LANGUAGE AND LOFTY PURPOSE CHARACTERISTIC OF LIBERAL DOCUMENTS. SOME

OF THE CRITICS WHO HAVE LOOKED AT IT WITH A SOMEWHAT
JAUNDICED EYE CONSIDER IT IS REplete WITH "WOOLLY" THINKING
(THE LIBERALS AT BRIGHTON USED "SOGGY") AND SHORT ON
CAREFULLY THOUGHT-THROUGH SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS, HOWEVER
ELEQUENTLY THE PROBLEMS ARE DESCRIBED. THE MANIFESTO'S APPEAL
TO THE WIDE ELECTORATE CAN BEST BE OBSERVED IN THE COMING
WEEKS. ANNENBERG

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